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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 TEL AVIV 000417

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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Iran: Nuclear Program
- [1](#)2. Bush Inauguration

Key stories in the media:

Israel Radio reported that FM Silvan Shalom will meet with Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice tomorrow.

All media reported on Monday's "historic" UN General Assembly session to mark the liberation of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau (lead stories in all media except the ultra-Orthodox newspapers). Paraphrasing a remark made by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel at the session, Maariv bannered: "Has the World Learned a Lesson?"

Israel Radio reported that today the PA will deploy forces in the southern Gaza Strip, and that it is expecting Israel's response so that it can position them in the entire area. The radio cited Hamas as saying that it has hardly any disagreement with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) regarding the hudna (truce), which Hamas says depends on Israel's actions.

All media reported that, at his annual presentation to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of threats facing Israel, Mossad Director Meir Dagan warned Monday that by the end of this year, Iran will have reached the point of no return in its technology for manufacturing nuclear weapons, and that it will be able to build a nuclear bomb three or four years later. Dagan also said there are hints of nuclear programs underway in other Middle Eastern countries, such as Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and that the terror threat on Jewish interests in the Diaspora is increasing. Speaking on Israel Radio this morning, MK Yuval Steinitz, Chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, urged the West to thwart Iran's nuclear program.

Maariv reported that USAID intends to purchase the Katif Bloc's greenhouses in the Gaza Strip, and that it has published a USD 9-million tender on the matter. The newspaper notes Israel's satisfaction over this development, since it could finance some of the costs of the disengagement and the compensation to settlers. Israel Radio quoted a senior Israeli source as saying that Israel should evacuate the residents of the northern Gaza Strip village of Dahaniyeh, since they are considered collaborators with Israel.

Jerusalem Post reported that, while confident Russia will not finalize a deal selling shoulder-held anti-aircraft missiles to Syria during President Bashar Assad's current trip to Moscow, Israel is concerned that Moscow may mount the missiles on armored personnel carriers and sell them in a few months' time. Ha'aretz quoted Assad as saying in Moscow that Syria is interested in promoting the peace process with Israel, and not in the missiles. Maariv reported that Mossad Director Meir Dagan told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Monday that the voices of peace coming out of Damascus are only slogans.

Jerusalem Post reported that Diaspora Affairs Minister Natan Sharansky is expected to assert today, at a news conference timed to coincide with events linked to the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, that the

PA, even under new chairman Abbas, is engaged in the "promotion of genocide" against the Jewish people.

Ha'aretz reported that Binyamin region brigade commander Col. Mickey Edelstein has confirmed to Machsom Watch, a voluntary women's group that monitors checkpoints, that starting in July, East Jerusalem Palestinians will be denied freedom of movement into Ramallah.

Israel Radio reported that the state is appealing to the High Court of Justice in a bid to reverse a lower court's ruling on Monday that Tali Fahima, who was accused of "abetting the enemy," be released from detention and placed on house arrest.

Yediot reported that the IDF is disbanding its "hesder" units (in which yeshiva students combine military service with religious studies). The religious soldiers will be scattered among other units. The newspaper cites the IDF's concern that entire homogeneous religious units could have refused to serve evacuation orders during the implementation of the disengagement plan. However, Yediot cited senior sources in the IDF Manpower Branch as saying that the move is not related to the disengagement. In a different development, Ha'aretz reported that the IDF is reestablishing its psychological warfare unit, after a lengthy period in which the unit was dormant. It operates mostly in the Palestinian arena.

Ha'aretz reported that the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) has suspended its peace education program due to financial woes. In a letter to dozens of Jewish and Palestinian teachers from 70 schools in Israel and the West Bank, IPCRI explained that the tsunami in Asia and war in Iraq have led to a sharp decline in the donations received by the institution.

Ha'aretz and Maariv reported that the Jewish Leadership faction in the Likud, headed by far Right activist Moshe Feiglin, has been distributing tens of thousands of copies of a booklet calling for non-violent civil disobedience and non-violent civil rebellion as the ways to combat the disengagement plan. Jerusalem Post and Hatzofe reported that Likud D-G Arik Brami asked an internal party court Monday to oust Feiglin from the party. Leading media reported that on Monday, Rabbi Dov Lior, the Chairman of the Yesha rabbinical council of the Jewish settlements in the territories, endorsed a sticker justifying Jews who would sacrifice their lives to oppose disengagement.

All media reported that on Monday, the Nazareth Magistrate's Court acquitted an Israeli Arab woman from the Galilee village of Be'ana of all charges of failing to prevent the suicide bombing at Meron junction near Safed on August 4, 2002, which killed nine people besides the bomber. Bereaved relatives and the state prosecution plan to appeal the ruling.

Jerusalem Post reported that the Foreign Ministry called in Belgium's Ambassador Jean-Michel Veranneman de Watervliet on Monday to protest a meeting that his colleague, the Belgian Ambassador to Lebanon, held last week with Hizbullah chief Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah.

Ha'aretz cited Israel Airports Authority (IAA) assessments that the Karni cargo terminal suffered 4 million shekels (around USD 915,000) in financial damage as a result of the terrorist attack on January 13. The newspaper quoted a senior IAA officer as saying Monday that the government must relieve the Authority of the responsibility of operating the border terminal with the Palestinians.

Ha'aretz reported that the Knesset's Constitution, Justice and Law Committee is working quickly to prepare an amendment to the State Judicial Inquiry law to prevent publication of the classified sections of the Agranat Commission report on the Yom Kippur on January 28.

Leading media reported that the fundamentalist Orthodox Russian newspaper Rus Pravoslavnaya ran a letter asking the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation to open an investigation against all Jewish organizations throughout the country on suspicion of spreading incitement ("murderous rituals") and provoking ethnic strife. Israel Radio reported that, in a letter to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, 20 members of the Russian Duma have demanded that all Jewish organizations in Russia be outlawed. The media reported that FM Silvan Shalom, Natan Sharansky, and Russia's Chief Rabbi Berl Lazar have urged the Russian authorities to take action against the anti-Jewish

detractors.

Jerusalem Post printed a Jewish Telegraphic Agency report on American Jews of Iraqi descent, and their mixed reactions to the January 30 election.

Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz quoted Deputy Education Minister Rabbi Michael Melchior (Labor-Meimad) as saying that the Education Ministry policy that refuses to recognize undergraduate diplomas issued by U.S. universities (such as Yeshiva University) that accept a year of yeshiva study in Israel as degree credits, is wrong and will be overturned. (Ha'aretz quoted Melchior as saying that it will be canceled by the end of this month.)

1. Iran: Nuclear Program:

Summary:

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Threats [of military action] should spur Western non-military sanctions that, if they are comprehensive, swift and drastic, could still address the problem as effectively at a lower risk and cost."

Block Quotes:

"Sanctions First"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (January 25): "Despite the across-the-board declarations by George W. Bush, by John Kerry during his campaign, and by European leaders that an Iranian nuke is 'unacceptable,' it is an inevitability that the world will learn to live with. Yet the assumption that nothing can be done is premature, both on the diplomatic and military levels. Indeed, American and Israeli talk of military options should be understood as giving the diplomatic track its last and best chance. Unfortunately, much like before the war in Iraq, the chief opponents of military action are, by their own hand, removing all other options. The G-3 -- Britain, France and Germany -- seems set on a course of continuing to give Iran second chances and waving ineffective trade carrots until it is too late. One might be excused for concluding, given how accepting the G-3 is of Iran's obvious lies and obfuscation, that these countries are more concerned about staving off American action than they are about ending Iran's nuclear program.... Iran, despite being treated as a pariah by the United States, enjoys normal trade and diplomatic relations with most of the world. It has much more to lose from sanctions than did Libya, which was not nearly as integrated into the world economy.... Talk of military action should be taken at face value, because there may soon be no choice. But before that happens, such threats should spur Western non-military sanctions that, if they are comprehensive, swift and drastic, could still address the problem as effectively at a lower risk and cost. If military action becomes the only remaining option, Europe will have no one to blame but itself."

2. Bush Inauguration:

Summary:

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Support for democratization [in the Middle East] ... may be a proper short-term theme and long-term strategy but is not a comprehensive policy."

Block Quotes:

"The Next Four Years"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (January 25): "In his second inaugural speech President George W. Bush focused to a remarkable extent on promoting democracy in the world. While not mentioning specific countries or even regions, this policy is obviously directed mainly at the Middle East. Thus he has chosen this issue -- and not the war on

terrorism -- as the central theme of his next four years.... Support for democratization ... may be a proper short-term theme and long-term strategy but is not a comprehensive policy. During the next four years, the Bush administration is going to have to deal with issues and crises lying outside of its scope: how will it judge Palestinian efforts to stop terrorism and get a cease-fire? It is easy to advocate 'helping' the moderates, but the U.S. must evaluate whether they are succeeding or have failed to bring real change. What will the U.S. do to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons; how will it react if it obtains them? When will the U.S. begin a withdrawal from Iraq, and what will it do if the newly elected government is hostile and bloody fighting continues there? In what ways will U.S. efforts in battling terrorism develop given the experience since September 2001?"

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